



**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, February 8, 2023**

THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BY REMOTE PARTICIPATION.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Christina Wagar, Nancy Churchill, Kamori Cattadoris, Mary Selecky, Dr. Caleb Holtzer, Dr. Leslie Waters, Debra Wulff, Cheri Petersen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Katie Swain, Wes McCart

GUESTS: Shelly Nelson

NETCHD STAFF PRESENT: Jeanie Beegle, Sonja Moore, Jon Ness, Matt Schanz, Molly Corvino, Dr. Artzis

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Christina Wagar called the meeting to order at 8:01 am.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2023: The minutes were not included in the packet for the meeting, so this agenda item will be moved to the March 8, 2023 meeting.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES OR COMMENTS: None.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO AGENDA: None.

DOMESTIC ANIMAL WASTE POLICY: Jon Ness stated the feedback received from PHAB members was incorporated into this final policy. Every complaint made will prompt a site visit from an environmental health specialist (EHS) at NETCHD. Based on the site visit, the EHS will determine if the offense is a nuisance or health hazard. For offenses categorized as a nuisance, compliance will be sought through education first. If the offense is an egregious health hazard, education and outreach will still be provided, but if necessary, a health officer order or referral to the prosecutor's office will occur.

Debra Wulff asked if she could provide comments on the Domestic Animal Waste Policy; although the policy is final and the deadline for comments has passed, Jon Ness welcomed any additional comments.

NETCHD STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE: A standing agenda item will be included in PHAB and BOH meetings to provide progress/status updates. Overall, the plan has shifted towards a year-to-year rolling strategic plan as opposed to a goal-oriented strategic plan. An updated draft will be sent to PHAB members in the next few weeks; the finalized version will be brought before the Board at the March meeting.

PHAB VACANCY UPDATE: No update, this item was not finalized at the BOH meeting.

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CHNA) / COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (CHIP) UPDATE: The final PHAB interviews for the CHNA are being completed.

Mary Selecky commented that housing was an issue that appeared in each county's CHNA.

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Dr. Caleb Holtzer stated the lack of affordable housing options and/or lack of available housing impacts people across all income levels, commenting that it even impacts recruiting efforts for the medical field in Republic.

Matt Schanz echoed these comments, stating the new Childhood Immunization Coordinator that will be based out of the Republic NETCHD office has experienced difficulties securing housing as well.

Nancy Churchill said the hospital district in Republic has invested into tiny houses as a housing solution. There is a need for additional tiny houses.

PUBLIC HEALTH FOCUS AREAS: Christina Wagar provided a summary of the public health focus areas that were brought up at the last meeting, which included radon, bed bugs, and mold.

Nancy requested to add substance abuse/opioids to the list of focus areas to be addressed. In particular, actions items would include providing Narcan, outreach, and testing kits.

Matt stated this topic will be added for further discussion amongst the PHAB at the next meeting.

URANIUM AND RADON: Jon Ness presented on uranium and radon. Highlights include the following:

- Radon is tasteless, odorless, and colorless. Radon can enter buildings through cracks in the foundation, through well water, or building materials (granite countertops).
- Radon exposure can increase risks for lung cancer even among non-smokers. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer overall – affecting approximately 21,000 people per year.
- In 2012, the NETCHD BOH added uranium to water-quality testing recommendations, and in 2017 testing for Group B public water-supply systems was added.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not monitor or regulate private wells; the property owner is responsible for their own testing. However, this only applies to construction prior to 2012. If a permit is obtained 2012 or later, the building permit process requires new wells be tested.
- Free test kits are available through the Washington State Department of Health at [Radon Test Kit Access Form | Washington State Department of Health](#). Test kits can also be purchased online or in most hardware stores.
- The EPA has a map of hotspots for radon, with all three counties in Zone 1, “Highest potential; average indoor radon levels may be greater than 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter).” [Radon Zone Map \(epa.gov\)](#)

Test results from the DOH Radon Program were made available for each of our three counties in 2020. Approximately one third of the tests completed exceeded the thresholds for recommended action. Outreach efforts will be implemented to provide education and potentially free test kits to community members from NETCHD offices.

Christina Wagar commented that it may be interesting to see if there is a correlation between cancer rates in our area and radon exposure. However, this type of data may be hard to pinpoint because there

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are other environmental and lifestyle variables at hand.

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE: Molly Corvino reported that flu levels are low throughout the area. Covid-19 has also remained low, however there are significant levels of respiratory illnesses occurring. In addition, NETCHD has observed the free test kits that are available at each office disappearing rapidly, which could be an early indicator of increasing Covid-19 levels within our counties. In closing, Molly noted the federal public health emergency will officially end May 11, 2023. The official end of the emergency status will impact testing, vaccination efforts, and insurance coverage. Approximately 8 million people nationally will be affected and may lose coverage.

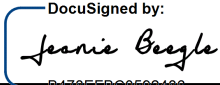
Dr. Caleb Holtzer stated a barrier that he has experienced is the unavailability of Paxlovid. He said many pharmacies are not stocking it because it is not commonly prescribed and has a lot of drug interactions. Patients are having to drive to Spokane to obtain Paxlovid.


Molly stated NETCHD has Paxlovid at the Colville NETCHD office that can be shared with Dr. Holtzer if needed.

Christina commented that the special Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) number that was previously required to prescribe suboxone is no longer required; providers can prescribe under a regular DEA number. This helps to increase availability and access for patients who need treatment.

Dr. Caleb Holtzer stated he will provide an overview on substance use disorder and suboxone/medically assisted treatment (MAT), as well as a fentanyl update at the next PHAB meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Christina Wagar adjourned the meeting at 8:59 am. The next meeting of the Public Health Advisory Board of Northeast Tri County Health District will be on March 8, 2023 by remote participation.

By 
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 Jeanie Beegle
 Administration Office Manager


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 Christina Wagar
 Public Health Advisory Board Chair